NEW TIMES
AND
NEW MEASURES

BY
ELBERT L. ORR

BOARD OF NATIONAL MISSIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.
156 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.


MOUNTAIN AREA
The Board of National Missions of
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
— in the U. S. A. —
— LEGEND —
Boundary of Southern Mountain Area
Boundary of Presbyteries under special promotion
Church or Preaching Point, aided through Department of Town and Country Work
Churches in a single parish
Community Station
Boarding School
Hospital or Dispensary
PENNSYLVANIA
OHIO
INDIANA
ILLINOIS
MISSOURI
KENTUCKY
WEST VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA
OZARK MOUNTAIN
BUCKHORN
CUMBERLAND MOUNTAIN
TENNESSEE
NORTH CAROLINA
ARKANSAS
FORT SMITH
LITTLE ROCK
OKLAHOMA
KANSAS
TEXAS
LOUISIANA
MISSISSIPPI
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
SOUTH CAROLINA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
SCALE OF MILES

New Times and New Measures

By ELBERT L. ORR

STEADFAST as the everlasting hills" is almost the last word in suggesting stability and permanence. The mountaineer has always felt a comforting sense of security in the belief that, come what may, he has his beloved mountains for his strong refuge and sure retreat. The rush and whirl of business, the smoke and noise of industry, the eager, exploring search for new and unlocked treasure stores have not disturbed his quiet mountain retreat nor made him anxious and uneasy lest the old land marks should be moved or torn away. Nor, indeed, has any one in our stirring country enjoyed a longer period of peaceful isolation than he.

But, for better or worse, his day of quietude is ended. Automobiles race through his valleys and scale the heights of his mountains; aeroplanes roar above him scanning the nooks and corners of his vast areas; deep sunk drills search for his stores of oil, gas, coal, and minerals, while great factories locate in increasing numbers along the flowing water courses. Strange people are coming in, new enterprises are being projected here and there, and, almost so suddenly as to be confusing, the mountaineer finds himself introduced to a new world, and, whether he will

or no, finds himself in the midst of things. It is a new day and none are more surprised or unprepared than he.

What is to be done about this new situation? Opportunity will not wait. Adjustments have to be made and that quickly. Problems, which in the earlier days were regarded as being solely moral and religious, came later to be regarded as being largely educational. But it is being conceded now that these problems must wait for solution upon the clearing of a more basic problem still, the economic one. Poverty has always retarded the mountain people, but it is only in these later days of economic pressure, intensified by the rapid development of the country, that the question of an adequate support for himself and his family has become for the mountaineer a more and more difficult one to answer. Yet he is coming to realize that he cannot remain under the limitations of poverty and at the same time press his way upward to an intellectual and spiritual equality with his brothers in the more favored sections.

A discriminating student of the situation in the Southern Mountains recently said, "For a century and a half now men and women have been trying to eke out an existence on the stony and eroded hillsides of the Allegheny Mountains. And with what results? He who walks afoot or rides horseback through the innermost recesses of the lonesome hills may easily read. After such a journey who could say that these

people of the mountains, relatively speaking, are today a jot more progressive or better off than they were a hundred years ago?"

This does not mean that missions in the mountains have failed, but it does mean that they have failed to solve one of the most trying problems, the economic one. It may be that missions should not even try to solve this problem, but evidently somebody should.

The section of our country known as the Southern Highlands affords an unusually rich and interesting history and furnishes the romantic setting for many thrilling tales and stories into which have been woven much of the heart of America's most interesting romance and adventure. Here, too, is the background of much of America's most serious experience in love and war, in statescraft and politics, in industry and development, in education and religion. Not to become acquainted with this history is to miss a very important cross section of the record of America's experience in building her outstanding civilization.

Whoever turns to a study of the Southern Highlands, their historical background, their tradition, song and poetry, their romance, their heroism and sacrifice, their contribution made to our population and the present condition of her people, is almost sure to find the added interest of studying a people from the same stock as his own forbears and a people who are his own kith and kin. This is especially true of people living in the southern states, for many of them are products of the blood stream which flowed

over the mountain sides and out through the passes and valleys of the Highlands westward into the adjacent states. Barren as much of this section is, it has nevertheless been able to produce some of the best citizenship of which the nation can boast. The very ruggedness of the country and the effort necessary to dig a sustenance out of the rocky soil appear to have lent determination and stamina to the character of the people. It was through these rugged Highlands, fraught with difficulty and danger, that this good American blood had to filter in its course toward the undeveloped empire to the West.

To many the Southern Mountains have been a forgotten land. Allured by the luxuriant fertility of the valleys and plains, they have forgotten to inquire whether there is still "water in the old wells," or whether there is life in the old stock from which so much of our civilization sprang, and whether the section may not yet have a large contribution to make to our civilization if only an opportunity is given it. Beyond question, there remains abundant and potential life, ready, as always, to spring into action.

THE TERRITORY DEFINED

The Appalachians to the north are not so continuous or rugged as those to the south. They offered less resistance to the westward march and were more easily socialized. They became stirring centers of population where industries thrived, and where schools and churches prospered. But the mountains to

the south, with the Cumberlands spreading to the west, and the Blue Ridge to the east, formed almost an insuperable barrier to the westward stream of population. Vast areas could not be occupied, and many families, lodged in these fastnesses, became so isolated as to be practically lost to civilization. Some of the valley sections contain groups of industrious, prosperous, cultured people, but there are vast regions yet undeveloped.

The territory covered by the southern Appalachians reaches from southern Pennsylvania into northern Alabama and Georgia, an area approximately six hundred miles long and two hundred miles wide. It covers two hundred and fifty-one counties in nine different states, Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, a small part of Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennesee, West Virginia, and Virginia. The area is larger than that of England, Scotland, and Wales combined and over twice as large as the state of New York.

The scenery is unsurpassed in America, enchanting and beautiful beyond description, the climate is invigorating, and the entire region is abundantly watered with living springs and rivers. Vast resources of water, timber, minerals, oil and coal are native—a dormant empire awaiting the magic of money and industry. The seeds of a future civilization were sown many years ago on these barren plateaus and rocky hillsides, and we have marvelled that they were able to spring forth in so abundant a harvest. In the valley

sections churches have sprung up, and schools and colleges have been planted, sending out many useful Christian workers. But much of the area is rough and steep and the soil very poor, and the people have been submerged.

EARLY SETTLEMENTS

Romance and adventure played no small part in the early settlement of the mountains. But serious purpose dominated these hardy pioneers—the purpose to secure at any cost the blessing of religious freedom. Immigrants from Europe poured onto the Atlantic shores in a steadily increasing stream. Hard-headed Scots who had been induced by James I to land on his "plantation" in Ulster, Ireland, finding themselves still oppressed, migrated toward America in large numbers, starting as early as 1635. Pennsylvania, offering good harbors, religious liberty, and a democratic welcome, attracted by far the largest number of these Ulsterites, or Scotch-Irish.

Mr. John C. Campell shows that there were three main sources whence early settlers flowed out into the southern Appalachian region. One was central Pennsylvania, another was western Pennsylvania, and the third was the Piedmont Plateau of Carolina. The first two sources furnished German and Scotch Irish, and the Piedmont furnished English. Pennsylvania emigrants moved southward, taking what was known as the Ohio River route, or the famous Wilderness Road. The latter led them down the greater Appalach-

ian Valley, whence they pressed out even onto the Piedmont Plateau. These settlers flowed down the valleys and climbed the mountain sides, and many of them stuck as permanent inhabitants. It is difficult to ascertain the relative proportion of Scotch-Irish and Germans in the central Pennsylvania reservoir which furnished so large a proportion of the early settlers, but it seems well established that the Scotch-Irish blood predominated. Nor can we know just how much of the parent stock remains, and how much was drawn out in the later westward migrations just before 1850. Yet it is confidently asserted by the best authorities that there remains in the mountain area a people who "are probably as pure a stock as we can boast in America. Almost all their ancestors came from the British Isles. The principal element is Scotch, and especially Ulster Scotch."

LATER EMIGRATION AND PRESENT STOCK

The significance of these early settlements shows up in its effect upon the later western population. By 1800 streams of migration began to flow westward from the north, almost exclusively by the Ohio River route, into Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri and other states west. This population can be traced back to the Pennsylvania reservoir. Then between 1830 and 1850 there began a migration of the Southern Mountain population westward into the valley states. This was due mainly to economic conditions, especially the decline in the price of tobacco

and cotton and the exhaustion of the soil due to unskilled methods of farming. It is said that before 1850 Virginia had lost by migration 26% of her native-born inhabitants, South Carolina had lost 36% and North Carolina 31%. From 1831 to 1840 Georgia gained nearly 34%, Alabama nearly 91% and Arkansas 275%. Hence may be traced the population of Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and, across the Mississippi River, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma and westward. This population is the direct descendent of southern mountaineer stock. But, strangely enough, by 1850 this westward migration had practically ceased, except for individual cases, and there has been almost none since that time. The average mountaineer has remained wedded to his homestead, nurturing no inclination to find his way out of the quiet seclusion of his rugged environment into the bustling, humming centers of population in the valleys and plains. Only within the last few years has there been any restless movement.

There are approximately five and one-half millions of people in this area, nearly 85% of whom are native white of native white parentage. Excepting the eleven or twelve per cent of Negroes, and these almost all in the valley sections there is almost no other blood except white. Omitting West Virginia, the percentage of foreign-born population is less than one per cent. Many entire counties in several of these states do not boast a single foreigner within their limits.

There are three distinct population groups: First, the merely nominal mountaineer, a large class of people occupying the fertile valleys, who have established cities and conduct vast commercial enterprises. Although a direct mountain product, they cannot, of course, be distinguished from other prosperous, cultured people. Second, the normal, or typical mountaineer, living apart from the centers of wealth, and enjoying but little, if any, of life's luxury. They are a sturdy, intelligent, shrewd people who own their own homes and live an extremely simple, even austere, life. They are people of strong character and high honor, who cling to noble standards of morals and religion. Third, the submerged class, often mentioned as the "poor white." Among these there is but little initiative or ambition for a better situation in life. They respond readily to friendly assistance, but cannot emerge without the help of Christian hearts.

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The mountaineer preserves and proposes to perpetuate the country's most outstanding type of individualism. At his best he has retained and perhaps magnified the instincts which led him out of his European home in quest of civil and religious liberty. The fight through generations against poverty, disease, wild beasts, Indians and mountain barriers has intensified these instincts. But his struggle in sheer isolation has matured and stiffened his spirit of independence to a remarkable degree. "His dominant

trait is independence raised to the fourth power." Self-assertion, self-maintenance, and self-sufficiency are his strongholds. Cut him off from the supplies of the rest of the world, and why should he worry? He can maintain himself.

Naturally, under the conditions, the mountaineer has but small sense of social solidarity. His neighbors are often widely separated and there is not much social contact. Yet one of his outstanding virtues is friendliness; he would be scandalized if accused of inhospitality. Strangers receive a cordial and eager welcome, and any need must only be discovered to be immediately supplied. Yet the mountaineer is shy, reticent, and reserved. Strangers must prove their character and standing before being trusted, but once received into confidence one is secure in the hearts of most unyielding and unselfish friends.

The sense of citizenship is unusually strong and its prerogatives are his most treasured rights, civil, political, social, moral and religious. His freedom must go all the way. He will be bound by nobody. This very thing brought him from Europe and planted him in the mountains. It was such a spirit as this that fostered the Revolution and then nurtured the seeds of national freedom. American independence was first won in the hearts of these mountaineers. Familiar with the history and spirit of the mountain people, one cannot be surprised that they took such leadership in the movement for American Independence. "The declaration and constitution of the Watauga Association

in 1772; the declaration at Abingdon, Va., January, 1775; the raising of the flag of a new and independent nation called Transylvania at Boonsboro, Ky., May 23rd, 1775; the Mecklenburg Resolutions in North Carolina, May 31st, 1775; all these declarations by mountain men made possible the more widespread Continental Declaration of Independence at Philadelphia, July 4th, 1776." The famous Mecklenburg document ran thus: "We the citizens of Mecklenburg County (N. C.) abjure all political connection, contract, or association with that nation who have wantonly trampled on our rights and liberties," and "do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people."

Sensitive, shrewd, honorable, prejudiced, cautious above measure, prudent, suspicious of persons and situations he does not thoroughly understand, the mountaineer yet possesses much to be desired in human character and, given an opportunity, will develop those qualities of leadership which brought the entire nation under a debt of gratitude to his forbears.

SOCIAL LIFE

Socially the mountaineer is greatly handicapped. His isolation has made him an individualist and rendered the development of the social, or group, consciousness practically an impossibility. Avenues of social expression and mediums of social development are simply not at hand. Families are often large and the members loyally devoted to each other. But indi-

vidualism is seen even in the family group, and social responsibility in its large connections is hardly recognized. Family feuds formerly were prevalent, but fortunately are passing. Provincialism is noted, and many habits of speech and home life characterize the people. Homes are often poorly constructed and meagerly furnished and accommodations are reduced to a minimum. But guests are received into these homes without hesitation and are "as welcome as the flowers in May." Hospitality is a mountain virtue of traditional standing. The children are taught to be respectful and obedient, conjugal relationships are generally scrupulously maintained, neighborliness is everywhere an outstanding obligation and many crimes and immoralities are surprisingly lacking.

Social isolation, poor schools, poor church facilities, if any at all, lack of social expression and leadership, can have only one result, impoverishment and suppression of the social instinct. Organized play is quite unknown: neither children nor adults know how to play. Child marriage is prelevant, but with the serious purpose of rearing a family, and this family life is frequently begun with such meager accommodations as to be amazing.

The effect of this lack of social development is seen also in the difficulty with which this type can be brought into co-operative movements. The mountain farmer does not encourage farm organizations. He is inclined to be suspicious of organizations and combines and prefers to go it alone. This attitude is

reflected in the difficulty which leaders sometimes encounter in trying to build good roads, schools, churches, and other community enterprises requiring community co-operation. In many respects the mountaineer has remained an isolationist, an individualist. But the coming of the highway, the high school, rural free delivery, railroads and industrial enterprises, is now rapidly breaking down the isolation and introducing features of community development in many parts of the mountain area.

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

The mountaineer has never been notable for thrift. His individualism has not fostered community interest in industrial undertakings. He has been satisfied with the meagerness of his accommodations and with his economic isolation. He has been slow to realize that primitive tools and methods and his single-handed efforts are keeping him impoverished and making development impossible. The land is rough and poor, often unavailable for farming at all. Although the narrow valleys are fertile and many mountain slopes fairly productive, yet there are wide stretches of poor plateau, and many steep declines, valleys, and rough gorges, where farming is impracticable. The table land areas are known as the "barrens" or "barnes," and without fertilization will yield almost nothing. Soil analysis and diversified farming are but recently introduced, and not yet extensively practiced. There is usually a rude dwelling and barn,

a small acreage for vegetables, corn, or tobacco, and perhaps a small orchard, and, with what could be secured by timbering and odd jobs, there has been only a bare living, sometimes meager in the extreme.

A primary source of wealth has been the astonishing breadth of forest, containing valuable hardwoods of many varieties, oak, ash, hickory, poplar, chestnut, and beech. Millions of cross ties have been cut and much hickory has been shipped for automobile parts and golf sticks. Chestnut trees, being long and slender, have been in great demand for telephone, telegraph, and electric power poles. But much of the timberland has been ravaged by waste and the chestnut forests are threatened by extinction from an unchecked disease. The other natural resources of the country could not be developed due to ruggedness of the area and the tremendous expense involved. Meanwhile the mountaineer has remained poor, very poor. His rocky farm can barely be induced to sustain him and through long stretches of the year he may see almost no money at all. With no centers of trade, no mills or factories where wages can be earned, much of the year is spent in idleness and hunting.

The typical mountain farm is a small one—the average for the Kentucky mountains being eighty-two acres, with probably only twenty acres that can be tilled. Under average conditions the farmer can hardly hope to secure a reasonable standard of living from the soil. What shall he do? Some careful students are now clearly advocating the depopulation of

the non-arable sections, permitting them to return to the growing of forest trees, while the inhabitants are urged to move to the valleys, or industrial centers, where a reasonable living can be secured. "Scratching a mountain side with a plow and hoe is not farming at all in many cases but a way of keeping a family in dire poverty. . . . Depopulation should be the goal of many of the remoter regions."

Rapid change is even now being wrought. Agricultural conditions are being improved, especially in more fertile sections, by county agents, extension work of schools, the teaching of agriculture in schools and by improved transportation. The population is steadily increasing, due mostly to the growth of towns, mining, and manufacturing centers. Schools in many sections are improved, with greatly increased enrollment in high schools and with grammar schools consolidated and longer terms provided. It is yet true, however, that thousands of children attend school in buildings no better than those which their grandparents attended. Health conditions are being gradually improved, homes are being better built, and a general response is seen to the influence of agencies that have long been at work to break up the isolation and bring the mountain people into touch with civilization.

With help there is great promise in the mountain people. Given trained leaders, a sound program, "and the fine, sturdy mountain stock as a base upon which to build the finer things of our civilization, and

you will have a product that will master all conditions." An enthusiastic writer pictures what may be seen in the next hundred years: "This extensive mountain area will be completely resuscitated and adjusted to its social and economic possibilities. Countless wheels of industry driven by waterpower, now unused, will enliven the barren hillsides, dotting them with prosperous villages and giving rise to a new and better type of factory life than that commonly known. . . . Such agriculture as remains will be not small-scale, hand-labor cropping, but scientific fruit-growing and truck gardening on large-scale stock-raising and foresty. . . . Non-productive but scenic areas from which much of this industrialized village population has been drawn, will have gradually shifted over to recreational and playground purposes, and will have thus become not only useful and socially valuable, but economically productive as well. . . . But the best thing about this canvass of the future will be the sound, economic foundation underlying all else."

POTENTIAL LIFE

But after all the purpose of our endeavor to solve economic problems is merely incidental to the purpose to develop and release life. The outlook for the poor farmer is dark, but who will say that it is darker than that of the poorer classes crowded into the industrial centers? "The wealth of the farmer lies in his virtuous sons and daughters trained by the necessity of toil." We know very well that people,

not only in the mountains, but also in the better farming sections, are shifting toward the centers, suggesting that the economic problem is not local.

So Christian workers in the mountains are seeking to make the most of the traditional ideals and religious heritage of the mountain people. Probably no other reservoir of such pure American stock remains to be drawn upon, and no other type of work will yield such immediate results. One missionary church, now disorganized, is said to have sent out one preacher each year for twenty-six consecutive years, sending out a total of 57. Some of our greatest gospel singers, as Charles M. Alexander, Homer Rodeheaver, Oscar Seagle, Homer Hammondtree and others, grew up in the mountains. Maryville College alone has sent out nearly a hundred foreign missionaries. Teachers, physicians, statesmen, and other Christian leaders by the hundreds have been produced in this area.

The work is done by pastors, evangelists, teachers, Sunday School Missionaries, nurses, physicians, community workers, etc. The churches are scattered and the workers widely separated, so that no little devotion to the cause is necessary to keep one at the task. The mission schools have made a large contribution to the people, probably doing more than any other agency toward standardizing life. Such schools in Tennessee as Mossop Memorial for Mountain Girls; Alpine, Washington College for both boys and girls; Dorland-Bell and the Asheville group, in North

Carolina; Berea, in Kentucky, and the larger, yet none the less missionary, colleges scattered throughout the region, have had an influence in Christian education which cannot be measured.

Illustrations could be multiplied to show how readily the young people especially respond to help. The Rev. Paul E. Doran, a missionary pastor, has worked on the same field for ten years. During the time the membership in his churches has more than doubled, Sunday schools have been organized, better schools have been provided and a general uplift in life's better things has been seen. Young people have been encouraged to go out to school. The first year six went, but the number increased each year until last year fifty-nine went. The pastor has also led in economic betterment—the organizing of co-operatives, the building of roads, organization of farmers' clubs, boys' and girls' clubs, and the like. Renters have been encouraged to buy homes, credit for this being provided. The pastor's home is the center of all kinds of community enterprise and interest.

The Rev. W. W. Baxter, a Sunday school missionary, has organized, and cared for, more than sixty-three mission Sunday schools. Last year he sent twenty-three young people out of these communities to one of the best mountain schools. Miss Jennie Moore has spent twenty-four remarkable years in her community center at Rocky Fork in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Writing of her work, she said "The work here is growing. Our young people from this

school pass on to higher schools quite one hundred per cent. None think of not going on to school. I have sent 287 on to higher schools, last year being the banner year when 90 entered higher schools. Since coming here more than 600 have attended our school, 15 have been graduated from college, 32 from Asheville Normal, and one from Yale." She has many teachers and other professional workers who represent her efforts, besides scores of fine citizens who received their life incentive from her heart. It is a wonderfully fruitful ministry for Christ. Miss Helen Dingman, of Berea, Kentucky, has written, "Indeed, Berea is a unique institution and truly can it be said 'the only Berea'. A non-sectarian school, founded about seventy years ago to make a Christian education possible to our mountain youth, today she is enrolling about 2700 students each year, 90% of whom come from the strictly mountain section of our Southern States."

Here remains potential life, awaiting the magic of Christian touch and sympathy; a new day of awakening and development has set the mountain people astir; on the mountain peaks and in the valleys eager young hearts are ready to respond to the loving call and beckoning hand of Christian leadership. One feels anew the oppression of urgency of the Master who pleaded that the King's business requireth haste, lest the opportunity slip by overnight. Again it must be said that the opportunity will not tarry: what is done must be done quickly. Workers cannot do bet-

ter than be guided by the Spirit which stirred the heart of John C. Campbell, greater than any other student of the Southern Mountains, and which he breathed in Lowell's lines:

> "New times demand new measures and
> new men;
> The world advances, and in time outgrows
> The laws that in our fathers' day were best;
> And, doubtless, after us, some purer scheme
> Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,
> Made wise by the steady growth of truth."

Price, Ten Cents